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5 January 1965

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

SUBJECT: NRO Ex Com Meeting, 1100 hours, 5 January, in  
Secretary Vance's office

PRESENT: Mr. McCone, Secretary Vance, General Carter, Dr.  
Fubini, and Dr. McMillan.

1. Mr. Vance opened the discussion thanking Mr. McCone for his views on [redacted] equipment in the SAC aircraft overflying Cuba. He stated his understanding that the Joint Chiefs of Staff were presently engaged in a study of the problem and thought they would be coming up next week with their recommendations. It was his impression that the Joint Chiefs would act favorably on Mr. McCone's proposals. Fubini stated that all SAC U-2 aircraft would be configured for this [redacted] Mr. McCone stated that if there was any problem in immediate availabilities he felt CIA could help with their aircraft, and General Carter stated that this was true and that we were in a good position for such help. [redacted]

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3. There then ensued a long, involved discussion of the establishment of intelligence requirements for overhead reconnaissance. Fubini said that he thought the COMOR paper was good but not totally responsive, that what we really needed was a "table of recognition" which would indicate the targets that we needed to cover, the degree of resolution required for them and some indications of our capabilities to acquire this intelligence. He said he wanted a study showing the probability of detecting targets of known signatures by various acquisition means, the probability of identifying targets when we do not know the signature, and the number of possible targets in each class. Mr. McCone pointed out that he had raised this precise problem at the USIB and this was why the COMOR paper had not been approved. He pointed out that the COMOR paper had been referred to NRO for an analysis of capabilities to collect, number of missions, resolutions acquired, etc. Mr. McCone said he had no intention of approving requirements without knowing what their cost would be in terms of research and development and also the reconnaissance effort required. Dr. Fubini stated he had raised this matter with General Carroll after reading the COMOR paper, and Mr. McCone said General Carroll had planned to discuss this subject with Mr. McCone at an early opportunity. It appears that the instructions to COMOR in connection with their paper as well as the instructions to NRO to report on the COMOR paper are adequate for the time being.

4. Mr. McCone pointed out that this led him into a real problem on the FY 66 budget since he had no knowledge of the NRO submissions or requirements, nor had they been presented to him as should have been done in accordance with the National Reconnaissance Plan. He stated that it was perfectly apparent that the things the President had indicated in his speech last night that were to be done could be done only with hard cash and that in the light of our budget economies this hard cash could come only from the Department of Defense budget. This in turn could come only from the most precise and careful program planning, and the most arduous, day-by-day management of programs. This led Mr. McCone to conjecture whether or not we were going down the right road with a high resolution, narrow swatch width as epitomized by [REDACTED] in the light of these fundamental budget inhibitions. He thought perhaps we might be able to save [REDACTED] from the NRP by the most intensive analysis of intelligence requirements matched against intelligence capabilities. He pointed out some of the assets available in the [REDACTED] project and suggested that we get organized to take a close look at this and all other high-cost programs. As to the OXCART and the RS-71, since they both appeared to have the same missions, Mr. McCone suggested that perhaps the [REDACTED]

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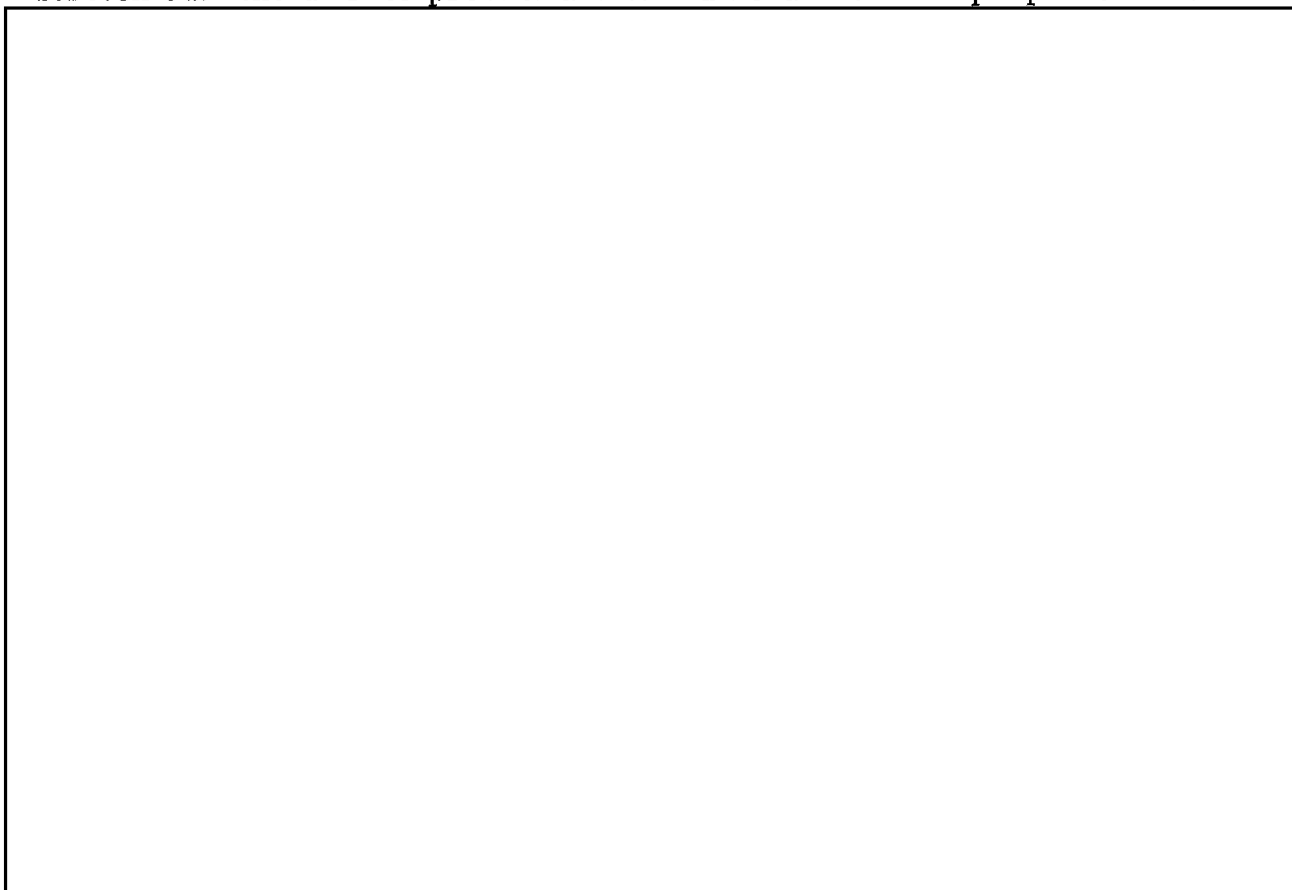
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Vance stated that while Mr. McCone's duplication concern was certainly valid that neither he nor McNamara had decided on the need for a follow-on bomber and that if they were to make this decision affirmatively, there were several alternatives more appealing than modifying the RS-71. Specifically, he said, that for [ ] of development work they could "stretch out" the TFX to provide a better aircraft for this purpose. Mr.



ACTION: DD/S&T to get in touch with Dr. Fubini at once and give him the full [ ] treatment.

5. As to TAGBOARD, Fubini and Vance both stated that they were highly prejudiced for it because it did not require a pilot and they cited the recent case of the drone shot down by the ChiComs in which practically no lights at all were turned on around town or internationally. They said that had a pilot been lost the shoot-down would really have been a major international event. Nevertheless, since this involves considerable amounts of money, and since procurement for new BLUE SPRINGS type drones is necessary, it was agreed that Dr. Herb York would be contacted by Fubini and asked to take a look at the drone systems.

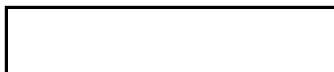
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6. Mr. McCone then suggested that a new panel of consultants be formed consisting of such people as Purcell, Land, Donovan, perhaps Baker and others, to look at the entire National Reconnaissance Plan and come up with recommendations for a new plan in the light of various limiting requirements and assets and particularly dollars. Mr. McCone stated that the responsibility belongs to McNamara and Vance and himself and to no one else, but that they needed the advice and guidance of outside consultants, as well as all the in-house capabilities we might have available. Mr. Vance pointed out that COMOR has work to do, NRO has work to do, and McMillan's Steering Group has work to do. Dr. McMillan stated that his Steering Group was really an in-house capability if you included [redacted] as being in-house assets. Mr. McCone at this juncture stated that [redacted] was most promising and that within several weeks the feasibility study would be ready for presentation. He stated that the firms involved were beginning to feel the pinch of keeping personnel on in the hopes of continuing the development whereas at the moment they had no work for these people to do. Dr. Fubini said this was not a new situation in Government and that what the Department of Defense did was to arrange for incremental financing to hold the top layer of personnel and keep them on the payroll during these interim periods when decisions had to be made. Mr. McCone stated that we should make the decision on [redacted] prior to 1 February and that some of us should probably go up to [redacted] to see the mock-up in addition to having the [redacted] people come down here and with CIA put on a feasibility presentation. Dr. Fubini pointed out that he hoped this could be done prior to 24 January since he had a trip planned to NATO after that.

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7. Overall analysis of this meeting is that Mr. Vance and Mr. McCone are going to take a very hard, intensive, and critical look at intelligence requirements, as well as developmental projects to meet these requirements, and that insofar as the National Reconnaissance Plan is concerned and specifically the commitment of funds without Vance-McCone approval, my judgment is that the honeymoon is over. I foresee the possibility of cutting off [redacted] entirely, pushing ahead with [redacted] or something closely resembling it, combining the OXCART-RS-71 assets, phasing out CORONA [redacted] cutting out [redacted] in favor of [redacted], probably going ahead with TAGBOARD at its present level, etc., etc., etc.

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8. There was no discussion of ARGON, CORONA, [redacted] West Coast organization, or NRO agreement.

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